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NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH.

SPEECH

OF

HON. I. NEWTON EVANS, ✓

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1885.



WASHINGTON.
1885.

S P E E C H
OF
HON. I. NEWTON EVANS.

On the clause in the deficiency bill which abolishes the National Board of Health.

Mr. EVANS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Committee on Public Health, of which I have the honor to be a member, is specially charged with the duty of investigating and reporting on matters affecting the public health. The committee recently submitted its views, and by order of this House their recommendation that an appropriation be made for continuing the work of the National Board of Health was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

That committee has assumed not only to ignore the recommendation of the Public Health Committee, which has carefully investigated the subject with every facility for ascertaining the needs of the country in this direction, but has also attempted to repeal general legislation on this appropriation bill.

The clause to abolish the board, as provided on page 13, line 301, can not but be regarded as new legislation; while it may not be subject to a point of order for the reason that it decreases expenditures, but for that reason, if for no other, it has no business in this bill. The object of a deficiency bill is to make appropriations to pay the expenses of the Government incurred in excess of the sums appropriated for the last fiscal year. This can in no wise be regarded as a deficiency, and therefore is not germane.

It is claimed that there is no need of a national board of health.

Are we to take the dictum of members of the Committee on Appropriations on a subject over which they have no jurisdiction as against the formal report of the committee to which this House has specially confided the care of health matters? Is the Appropriations Committee

to say to us this is needed and that is not needed, as may best serve its purpose, and are we to tamely submit to its dictation and under its whip and spur fly as it directs? If such is to be the decision the sooner the whole House is merged in one huge appropriation committee the better.

The interests involved in the question under consideration are of too grave a character, too far-reaching and important in their results, to be passed over lightly or to be brushed away with the stroke of a pen.

The protection of human life and the promotion of the public health are questions of vital importance. To none of greater moment can the attention of the private citizen or the legislator be directed.

The question has been asked by some of the members of this House: What has been the work of the National Board of Health, and what good has it accomplished? In answer to their inquiries I beg leave to print the following, which is a part of their report for the year 1884:

II. The collection of information with regard to the sanitary condition of some of the principal cities and towns in the United States. Work in this direction was organized at the first session of the board by the printing, with additions and corrections, of a series of schedules of questions for the sanitary survey of a city; the original schedules for this purpose having been prepared several years previously by a committee of the American Public Health Association. A number of these schedules have been returned to the board properly filled up, and others are in course of completion. It is believed that the result has already been good in indicating the lines of inquiry which should be pursued by municipal authorities in relation to sanitary matters, and that hereafter a large amount of valuable information might be collected by this means.

III. The appointment of a commission to investigate yellow fever in the island of Cuba; consisting of Dr. S. E. Chaillé and Col. T. S. Hardie, C. E., of New Orleans, Dr. John Guiterás, of Philadelphia, and Surgeon George M. Sternberg, United States Army.

From their report it appears that yellow fever must be considered as endemic in the island of Cuba, and that for many years it has prevailed annually in the principal ports. The facts presented do not confirm the theory of the spontaneous origin of the yellow-fever poison on board ships, and make it improbable that the cleansing of the harbor of Havana and the constant renewal of its waters, however desirable, would prevent the infection of the shipping at this port.

IV. The standing committee of the board on sanitary legislation, consisting of Drs. H. I. Bowditch, S. M. Bemiss, and Stephen Smith, employed a competent legal authority of Boston to collect and collate the sanitary laws of the United States and of the several States, including not only the statutes but the decisions of the several courts, on all questions involving the public health.

This compilation was of great practical interest and utility to all interested in sanitary legislation.

V. At the request of the board, an investigation as to the best method of determining the amount and character of organic matter in the air was undertaken by Professor Ira Remsen, of the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore.

VI. An investigation as to the effects of disinfectants, and especially of those

used for disinfecting inclosed spaces, was undertaken by Dr. W. S. Bigelow, of Boston, assisted by Dr. H. P. Bowditch, professor of physiology, and Dr. Wood, professor of chemistry of Howard University, the whole being under the general direction and advice of Dr. C. F. Folsom, secretary State board of health of Massachusetts.

VII. An investigation as to the composition and merits of the various patent disinfectants was made at the request of the board by Professor C. F. Chandler, of Columbia College, president of the board of health of New York city.

VIII. An investigation as to the prevalence of adulterations in food or drugs in the United States, under the direction of Dr. H. A. Johnson, chairman of the standing committee on this subject. In this connection a paper upon the deteriorations and adulterations of food was prepared for the board by Dr. R. M. Kedzie, president of the State board of health of Michigan, and a paper on the adulterations of drugs by Professor L. Diehl, of Louisville, Ky.

IX. A preliminary inquiry as to the diseases of food-producing animals of the United States, and the legislation, whether State or national, which seems desirable in regard to this subject. This was under the direction of a standing committee of the board, composed of Drs. J. L. Cabell, T. S. Verdi, and P. H. Bailhache, and special reports upon the subject for this committee were prepared by Professor James Law, of Cornell University, New York, and by T. S. Verdi, member of the board.

X. An investigation of the flow of sewers in relation to their sizes and gradients was carried on under the direction of Col. George E. Waring, jr., of Newport, R. I., with a view to determining the most efficient and least expensive form of sewers.

It may be observed that the results of this investigation have already been of practical importance, since it was the presentation of a portion of these results to the committee charged with the sanitary survey of Memphis which led that committee to recommend a scheme for the sewerage of that city, based on the researches of Colonel Waring, estimated to cost about \$225,000, in preference to a plan of sewerage prepared in the ordinary manner and estimated to cost \$500,000.

XI. A sanitary survey of the eastern coast of New Jersey bordering on New York Harbor was made with the aid of this board, under the direction of the State board of health of New Jersey.

XII. A sanitary survey of the city of Memphis, Tenn., was commenced as soon after the close of the epidemic as possible, under the direction of a special committee of the National Board of Health, of which Dr. J. S. Billings was chairman. A preliminary report of this committee was prepared to meet the urgent demand on the part of the municipal authorities for advice as to the course to be pursued.

XIII. An investigation as to the hygiene of the mercantile marine and as to what legislation is expedient to improve its sanitary condition. Surgeon P. H. Bailhache, U. S. M. H. S., was especially detailed by the chief of that bureau to prepare this report.

XIV. An investigation by Dr. Elisha Harris, of New York, upon diphtheria as it occurred in Northern Vermont.

XV. An investigation by Professor Raphael Pumpelly, of the United States Geological Survey, upon the influence of various soils upon sanitation, especially with regard to drainage and methods of disposal of excreta.

XVI. An investigation by Drs. H. C. Wood and H. F. Formad, of Philadelphia, as to the effects of inoculating lower animals with diphtheritic exudation.

XVII. Researches by Dr. G. M. Sternberg, United States Army, upon suspended particles in the air of places liable to infection, which were commenced

in Havana and continued in New Orleans. These researches included an investigation upon organized particles from swamps and other malarious localities, with the view of testing the accuracy of the observations of Klebs and Tommasi-Crudeli, and others, on the existence of spores alleged to be the producing cause of malarial fevers.

XVIII. A report by Dr. J. J. Woodward, United States Army, on the pathological history of yellow fever.

XIX. A report by Professor Abbe, of the Signal Service Bureau, on the possible relations between meteorological phenomena and vital statistics, and especially on the graphical methods of representing such data.

XX. An investigation by Col. G. E. Waring, jr., of Newport, R. I., on the influence on the water-seal of traps of different kinds of currents of water passing through them or through the pipes into which they deliver, under a variety of conditions, covering ventilation, copious or partial, and induced currents arising from the passage of water over the branches of different form and arrangement, including experiments with regard to siphoning and the best manner to secure an adequate flush for water-closets, drains, &c.

XXI. An investigation by Professor Ira Remsen, of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, as to the amount of carbonic oxide in furnace-heated rooms.

XXII. The history of quarantine in the United States, exhibiting the occasions which give rise to quarantine legislation, or attempts at such legislation, by States or by the General Government, prepared by Dr. Stephen Smith, a member of the board.

XXIII. A report by Dr. Charles Smart on the water supply of Mobile and New Orleans.

XXIV. A sanitary survey of selected portions of Baltimore city was undertaken by this board, in compliance with the request of the city council, by Dr. C. W. Chancellor, secretary of the State board of health.

XXV. Experimental investigations, by George M. Sternberg, surgeon U. S. A., relating to the etiology of the malarial fevers.

XXVI. A report upon the sewerage systems of the principal cities of Europe, by Rudolph Hering, sanitary engineer.

XXVII. An investigation on the best method of determining the quantity of organic matter in potable water, and the specific effects of variously contaminated water on the health of persons who have used it, by Prof. J. W. Mallet, of the University of Virginia.

XXVIII. An investigation into the sanitary condition of summer resorts, by E. W. Bowditch, sanitary engineer.

XXIX. An investigation into the conditions of arsenical poisoning by means of emanations from wall papers, carpets, and other furniture containing arsenical coloring matter, by Professor Wood, of Harvard University.

XXX. An investigation into the conditions under which different styles of traps lose their water-seal by siphon action, by George E. Waring, jr., S. E., Edward S. Philbrick, C. E., and Ernest W. Bowditch, S. E.

XXXI. An inquiry into the causes and nature of malaria, with special reference to the conditions of its recent prevalence in the States of New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, was commenced, with the approval and co-operation of the several State boards of health, who were to furnish the topographical and clinical data, while the scientific investigation of the essential nature of the malarial poison by experimental processes similar to those of Klebs, Tommasi-Crudeli, and Sternberg was assigned to Dr. J. D. Whitney, of Boston.

This investigation was regarded by this board as likely to lead to very important results in their bearing upon the public health of an extensive region recently invaded by malarial fever. It was clearly such an investigation as was

within the scope of the duties assigned to the board by the act of March 3, 1879, and as relating to a subject in which the entire country is more or less interested, was one for which the service of a national board of health was eminently appropriate. It is deeply to be regretted, in the interests of the public health, that it has been necessarily abandoned for want of an appropriation applicable to such purposes.

XXXII. A report of the various forms of legislation by which, in this country, attempts have been made to secure registration of vital statistics, with appended copies of all the various acts passed up to the present time, together with a brief historical sketch of the progress of registration in each State, and the results obtained. There is also appended a table showing the results of an analysis of the various registration laws, so arranged that each can be readily compared with the others in regard to any particular item.

The results of the investigations above referred to have, in those cases in which the work has been completed, been transmitted to Congress with previous reports. Despite the limited circulation which has been given to these reports (only the usual 1,900 copies of each having as yet been printed) it is difficult to exaggerate the interest which has been awakened in the subjects treated, both in our own and in foreign countries. It is with feelings of national pride that we are able to record the commendations pronounced upon these efforts by eminent scientists and sanitarians both at home and abroad. The demand for these reports, both from our own people and from foreign countries, has far exceeded the provision made by Congress, and it is earnestly recommended that additional copies be authorized. It can hardly be expected that provision can be made for supplying all applicants with copies, but it is respectfully submitted the value attached to these reports by the medical profession, by sanitary engineers, and others interested in the advance of sanitary science warrant the publication of a sufficient number of copies to enable us to supply the public and college libraries of the country, and the Government and other sanitary organizations abroad.

SANITARY LEGISLATION.

The establishment of the National Board of Health and the success which attended its efforts in battling with the epidemic of 1879 awakened the liveliest interest in preventive measures throughout the country. The advantages to be derived from systematic organization and execution of sanitary regulations were practically demonstrated, and the methods of dealing with epidemics inaugurated by the board continue to receive universal support and co-operation. The impulse thus given to the study of all questions relating to general sanitation has resulted in a rapid increase in the number of State and local sanitary organizations. State boards of health or sanitary organizations bearing similar relations to the State governments are now provided for in twenty-seven States of the Union, while local organizations have been established in many of the important towns, as also in many of the counties throughout several of the States. In some of the States, notably in some of the Eastern and Western States, great improvements have been made, and sanitary organizations perfected which have not only already accomplished great good, but which also give promise of the most satisfactory results in the future.

To all efforts made to improve the sanitary condition of the country and prevent the spread of disease the national board has given its most earnest and hearty co-operation, and it is to be hoped that ere long there will be not only a State board of health in every State, but also a local board in every county and township throughout the country. It is to the application of preventive measures now known, and of others which will yet be discovered, that we must look, in a very great degree, for an improvement in the physical condition of

the people, for a limitation upon the prevalence of disease, for a reduction in the rate of mortality among the people, and a consequent increase in both the available strength and wealth of the nation. Much has already been added to the average length of human life by the application of measures herein referred to; and the rapid development of our country, and the extension of cities and towns in all portions of the land, press home with constantly increasing importance the obligation resting upon those in authority to provide the means for carrying forward all investigations which promise, however remotely, to result in improving and preserving the public health.

In addition to the duty of guarding against the introduction of such diseases as yellow fever, cholera, and small-pox from abroad comes the duty of preventing the spread of these diseases in case they make their appearance in any of our ports. During the years 1881 and 1882 small-pox was introduced into this country from Europe by immigrants seeking homes in this country, and serious epidemics occurred in the Western and Northwestern States. Under rules and regulations adopted by the board and in co-operation with the State and local boards of health in the threatened and infected localities much was accomplished in the way of eradicating the disease and in providing against its introduction. The incubative period of this disease is of such duration as to enable persons exposed to its infection in European cities just prior to embarkation to reach the interior of this country before the eruptive stage is reached. In consequence, therefore, of the nature of the disease hundreds of persons in its earlier stages passed the Atlantic quarantines and were far upon their way toward their destination in the West before it could be known from what they were suffering. More than one hundred towns in the Western States were thus infected, and great expense and suffering entailed upon the people of those sections.

The health authorities in the States which were visited by these epidemics urged with great force that it is the duty of the Government to protect the people against the epidemics originating with immigrants who have not yet reached their destination—who have not yet become citizens.

The National Board of Health has been in existence since March, 1879, and during that period has rendered services to the country which can only be estimated by hundreds of millions of dollars. The effect of the report of a single case of yellow fever in the Mississippi Valley, in the absence of the power, influence, and regulations of the National Board of Health has been to depress the price of produce in Western markets to the extent of many thousands of dollars in a single day, the commerce of the entire Mississippi Valley has been disturbed, and uncertainty and dread has pervaded the cities and towns along all her rivers.

Compare the condition of things prior to the organization of the National Board of Health with that which has prevailed under its direction. In 1878, yellow fever swept from the Gulf of Mexico to Ohio. A hundred towns were invaded by the dread disease; desolation marked its course. Individuals, towns, cities, and States were powerless. The disease sped on; commerce was destroyed, and while the coffers of the sympathizing people of the North were unlocked and money was poured

out with lavish hand to minister to the necessities of the sick and dying, all stood in awe, utterly helpless before the fell destroyer, until a hundred thousand cases and twenty thousand deaths made up the record of that fatal year.

Then came the call for a national board of health, and Congress was prompt to respond. With the recollections of 1878 still fresh in mind, Congress hastened to provide for the board, clothe it with powers, and furnish it with \$500,000 to be used in protecting the country from the ravages of disease. Before the board had scarcely organized, yellow fever broke out again. But mark the contrast. There are those on this floor who passed through those years of sorrow, grief, and death, and they can tell us of what use was the National Board of Health.

They can tell us that order was brought out of confusion; that confidence took the place of fear; that shotgun quarantines were banished; that commerce, controlled by sanitary regulations, went on unimpeded; that the disease, instead of spreading throughout the country, was confined almost wholly to the few towns in which it broke out early in the season. Instead of 100,000 cases there were but 2,000, and instead of 20,000 deaths there were 800. It may be argued that the material for yellow fever was used up in 1878; but the increased malignancy of the disease in 1879, as shown by the excessive mortality, which was 33 per cent. greater, demonstrates conclusively that but for the control exercised by the National Board of Health it would have spread far and wide.

As regards the effect upon the business of the Mississippi Valley in 1879, the secretary of the State board of health of Illinois states that the Illinois Central Railroad received from the South from July to October of that year over 100,000 tons of freight more than during the same period in 1878, while the passenger travel, which was almost wholly suspended in 1878, was scarcely interrupted in 1879, and that this result could not possibly have been reached without the co-operation of the National Board of Health, and that the utmost exertions of the board were required at all times to allay the fears of local authorities.

From that day to the present the people of the Mississippi Valley have known that epidemics can be controlled. From that day to the present they have been calling upon Congress to provide the board with means for protecting the people of the country.

The unanimous voice of the cities and towns, of railroad and steamboat companies, and State and local health organizations, was that the services rendered by the board were invaluable, and they are pressing us now to clothe the board with all the power necessary to continue its beneficent services.

But we are met with the reply that there is no need of two organizations to perform the same service; that the Marine-Hospital Service can do all that is needed to be done.

I do not propose to discuss or criticise the Marine-Hospital Service. As a medical man, I know for what purpose it was called into and is kept in being. Other members of the profession on this floor know as well as I the sphere of duties belonging to that service. Its field is in curative measures. It deals with sick sailors, while the National Board of Health operates in the field of preventive medicine, which is totally different, wholly foreign to the duties devolving legitimately upon the Marine-Hospital Service.

But whether the Marine-Hospital Service can perform satisfactorily to the country the duties belonging to the National Board of Health, I leave to the people and the various health organizations to say. The American Medical Association, the representative association of the profession in this country, has placed itself on record strongly in favor of supporting the National Board of Health, and their petition is now on the files of this House.

The American Public Health Association, embracing in its membership all the professions and many branches of business, numbering among its members the most distinguished sanitarians in the country, whose only aim is the public weal, this organization sends to us year by year its petition that the National Board of Health may be supported. Can it be alleged that these men, many of whom are dealing daily with disease in all its phases, do not know what is required? Shall we disregard the voice of the multitude, who tell us what the country needs, and be guided by the opposing voices of two or three who would destroy the national board?

Hear what the American Public Health Association says concerning the National Board of Health:

Resolved, That there is a work to be done by such a board which can not be done by any local or State board, and which is not, and can not be, adequately represented or fulfilled by any other branch of the national service, as illustrated in

its inspections and inquiries into special conditions so serious as to be national rather than local; and its dealings with yellow fever and small-pox; in its plans for consular health bills from foreign ports and refuge stations for a wide coast range; in its internal care over river and railroad transportation; in its investigation into malaria and other widespread causes of disease; in its valuable scientific and practical inquiries into the causes and courses of epidemics; in its comparisons of statistical facts, and in the widespread distribution of information most intimately affecting the vital conditions of our whole population.

Resolved, That while each State and each division of national service may contribute much aid in their respective spheres, we view with regret any curtailment of the functions of a board so constituted as to represent and unify the health interests of the entire nation.

Resolved, That we counsel the National Board to continue all the work possible under the present restricted appropriations, and await with confidence the extension of its powers of usefulness, and that appreciation of its work for the past and its necessity for the future which can but result from a calm and careful estimate of the safeguards requisite for national health and prosperity.

Resolved, That the confining the work of the board to cholera, yellow fever, and small-pox is believed to be in the highest degree injudicious. It should have the full powers for investigation of all preventable diseases conferred upon it by its constituting act and be granted the funds necessary for this purpose; and this should be done irrespective of the action which may be taken with regard to quarantine.

Resolved, That the members of the American Public Health Association hereby pledge their individual co-operation in endeavoring to secure such national legislation as shall insure to the National Board of Health such material aid as may be useful in carrying out with the greatest efficiency all measures pertaining to the interest of public health.

Resolved, That the advisory council of this association, representing, as it does, the sanitarians of the various States, be directed to use all laudable efforts to place before the President of the United States and the Congress at Washington and before members of Congress in their several States the very great importance to the welfare of the country of such action by the United States Government as shall increase to the fullest extent the means and powers of usefulness of the National Board of Health.

Resolved, That so long as the United States Government confines its maritime and inland quarantine service to the aiding of State and local boards of health, it is essential, for the best results, that such aid should be through channels most generally acceptable to State and local boards of health whose co-operation is requisite; and we sincerely believe that the National Board of Health is the channel most generally acceptable.

In addition to these well-known associations we have the resolutions adopted by the Sanitary Council of the Mississippi Valley, together with their memorial to the President of the United States, asking—

That \$100,000 be placed at the disposal of the National Board of Health, in the event of an outbreak of yellow fever, or other epidemic, on the coast of our country. That body can give confidence to the people of the valley as to the necessary precautions and safeguards yearly demanded by the exposure of our southern ports to ravages of yellow fever. Their inspection stations and the mode their officers have adopted in isolation and disinfection, establishing quarantine only when emergency or occasion demands it, have earned for the National

Board a degree of confidence that of itself alone is worth millions of dollars to the commerce of the country.

To supplant this body, or withhold from it the necessary funds to maintain inspection stations at all exposed points, will, in our humble judgment, clog the wheels of commerce by bringing about a feeling of distrust on the first alarm, be it true or false, and cause recourse to the shotgun policy of quarantine, which can but prove destructive to the commercial interests of the Mississippi Valley, which in a measure affect those of the entire Union. On motion, the draught of the memorial was approved, engrossed, and signed by the delegates from the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, and directed to be forwarded to the President at Washington.

We also have the petition of the president and secretary of the State board of health of New York. In their own behalf, and on behalf of that organization, they say that notwithstanding there are now twenty-nine State boards in existence "which are beginning a great work in and for their respective States, the particular function of the National Board of Health can not be exercised by any or all of these State boards." Neither the naval, the military, nor the marine hospital service can in the least fill the position and exercise the functions of a national health service. The duty, dignity, and sanitary welfare of the nation seem alike to warrant the conclusion that the National Board of Health should, under the advice of the President, be charged with all duties for which it was called into existence, and that in its relations to the State, interstate, and international public health interests the confidence and regard which are entertained for the board should be sufficient for imparting to the board all the official dignity and right which its high character actually merits.

The nations and people in all lands have good reason to expect such a course to be pursued toward the National Board of Health of the United States. The people of the American States look for it and will demand it. Public hygienists understand the necessity for it, and they, with the statesmen of the nations, point to the fact that contagious pests which are current in the foreign cities and countries are soon current in the United States. Even leprosy of distant lands is among our people, and the fevers and contagia of immigrants are being planted where the migrants move from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The national board's work and its scientific researches in the arts of disease-prevention are national.

The undersigned are aware that the factious and acrimonious opposition and unworthy criticism which sprang up against the national board some months ago has been used as means for organizing a permanent kind of force against it at Washington; but this must not militate against the continued life and usefulness of that branch of the public service. It has the confidence and ardent good will of the State boards of health and of all the most trusted sanitarians in this country and in Europe.

We have also the memorial of the board of health of the State of Alabama. The resolutions of the Illinois State board of health, the State board of health of West Virginia, the State board of health of Michigan, the State board of health of Wisconsin, the County Medical Society of New York, the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the South Carolina Medical Association, the board of health of Charleston, S. C., of the board of health of Memphis, of the Florida Medical Association, and last, but not least, the joint resolution of the senate and house of representatives of Pennsylvania passed within the last few days, asking Congress not to abolish the National Board of Health.

The query may arise in the minds of some of the members of this House, why was it necessary for these health organizations to petition Congress and the President of the United States not to cripple or abolish the National Board of Health? The reason is apparent: From selfish or jealous motives a factious opposition sprang up against the board; they succeeded in convincing that portion of the members of the House who have a mania for economy and reform that all the duties of the National Board of Health could be as efficiently performed by the Marine-Hospital Service. The Appropriations Committee accordingly, in 1882, incorporated into the sundry civil bill a provision that the board of health should not expend more than \$125,000, and provided that no other moneys should be used for the purposes of the board; and March 3, 1883, they gave the board only \$10,000. Last year (1884) they gave the board nothing, and they now come before this House not only ignoring the recommendations of the Public Health Committee to give the board \$25,000 to pay their per diem and necessary expenses and to place at the discretion of the President of the United States \$500,000 to be expended through such governmental agencies as he may designate, but they have inserted a clause in the bill to abolish entirely the National Board of Health.

Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that all the health organizations of the country and the best sanitarians of the land are ardent advocates of a national board of health, I can not help regarding the action of the Appropriations Committee as unwise and inconsiderate, especially at this time, when we are supposed to be facing a most fearful and fatal epidemic, which has passed beyond the limits of its home in Asia to Southern and Western Europe. From past experience of all former

epidemics of cholera, together with such frequent and rapid communication with England and the Continent, we can not escape the conviction that we shall have more or less of this disease in proportion to the sanitary measures adopted in the United States the coming summer and autumn.

The protection of human life and the promotion of the public health is an important duty which we, as legislators, have no right to overlook, and a fearful responsibility rests on those members of this House who would destroy any of the means, and especially the best organized means at our command, to prevent the introduction and spread of a most malignant, infectious, or contagious disease as that of Asiatic cholera.

Foreign governments have had for many years past national sanitary organizations, which they support and encourage by liberal appropriations. During this Congress we have appropriated \$150,000 for the investigation and prevention of pleuro-pneumonia and other diseases of the lower animals; we appropriate annually for a light-house system, the object of which is the protection of life as well as property, more than \$2,000,000, and for the Life-Saving Service not less than \$700,000, and now we are told that \$300,000 is enough to place in the hands of the President, and perhaps it is, if you are going to destroy the best and most efficient medium through which it should be used.

Mr. Chairman, I have not discussed the legal bearings of the question we are considering; I shall leave that to those whose profession is the law; suffice it to say, that I believe that Congress has power to regulate commerce for the purpose of giving greater security to the health and lives of her citizens, and the powers conferred by the Constitution in the general-welfare clause, when it becomes actually necessary for self-protection, fully authorizes the establishment and support of the National Board of Health.

In conclusion, I would say that from what the board has done in the past, for what its past success promises for the future, and in view of the threatened epidemic from abroad, I beg that every member on this floor who has the interests of his countrymen at heart will vote to strike out that clause in this bill which abolishes the National Board of Health.

